

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at M3.

Children's Health: Sports Safety

Each year, over 3 million children ages 14 and under suffer from sports-related injuries. It is estimated that as many as 20 percent of children participating in sports are injured each year.

Every day, from soccer fields to ice rinks, millions of youths participate in sporting activities. Participating in sports builds the body and mind, but can also result in injury if the proper safety precautions are ignored. Young athletes are at an increased risk for injury because their bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments are still growing.

Safety Tips

The risk of injury should not keep a child from participating in sports. Instead, parents and coaches need to take the proper precautions by following safety guidelines and providing the proper protective equipment to keep young athletes safe during play. Parents, coaches and children are encouraged to follow these safety precautions:

- Know and follow the rules of the sport.
- Be in good physical condition before beginning any sport.

- Wear proper apparel and protective gear.
- Know how to use athletic equipment.
- Be sure to warm up before playing.
- Drink plenty of liquids before playing to prevent dehydration.
- Do not play when tired or in pain.

If Injury Occurs

Prompt treatment can often prevent a minor injury from turning into something worse.

The first step is to use RICE therapy (rest, ice, compress and elevate). If a child displays any of the following signs, he or she may need to visit the doctor:

- Inability or decreased ability to play.
- Visible deformity.
- Severe pain that prevents the use of an arm or leg.
- Symptoms which persist or affect athletic performance.

Prevention

Most sports-related injuries are preventable. The following are steps coaches and parents can take to help reduce the chances of an injury occurring:

- Enroll your child in programs where you know an adult will be monitoring the event.
- Be sure your child uses the proper safety equipment.
- Teach your child to start by warming up and stretching.
- Remind your child to cool down afterwards.

Did You Know...?

RICE stands for Rest, Ice, Compress and Elevate. After being injured, an athlete should immediately rest, ice the injury to prevent swelling, wrap a bandage or towel around it and elevate it to drain excess fluid and reduce swelling.